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A BOOK FOR TODAY

Tully Takes a Look at the NSA

By JEREMIAH O'LEARY

THE SUPER SPIES

By Andrew Tully. William Morrow & Co. 256 pages. \$5.95.

With Halloween close upon us, this is as good a time as any for another of Andrew Tully's swoops into the world of the spooks. Having at various times dissected and examined the FBI, the CIA and law enforcement functions of Treasury agents, Tully now turns his attention to the National Security Agency.

What he has here is a book with not one but two subtitles. On the cover it is proclaimed that this is the inside story of "the NSA—America's Biggest, Most Secret, Most Powerful Spy Agency." But on the title page the agency is described as "More Secret, More Powerful Than The CIA."

Well, one shouldn't boggle at a touch of hyperbole. Surely NSA is more secret than CIA and FBI but whether it is more powerful can be questioned, since power is a relative thing. The FBI has the power to arrest car thieves, infiltrate the Ku Klux Klan or shoot it out with bank robbers. The CIA can recommend that uncertain trumpets be terminated with extreme prejudice, as the bureaucratic term put it. CIA also can equip and train invasion forces, maintain little armies of Montagnards who hate all Vietnamese, not just those from north of the DMZ, and do all manner of tricks involving people in its pursuit of intelligence.

Electronics Experts

Stripped of its comparisons with the multiplicity of other

agencies in the cloak-and-dagger business, NSA appears more in the light of a community of experts in electronic gadgetry and the language of codes and ciphers than in the exercise of such dramatics as shadowing, subverting, seducing and surreptitious shenanigans.

Once he has run through a summing up of what America has in the way of spymasters and spy agencies, Tully gets around to telling us what NSA does and how it does it. He puts the NSA budget at twice the \$750 million he estimates the CIA spends each year. Figuring the whole spy empire bill at \$4 billion per annum, clearly NSA is getting the lion's share of Tully's figures are correct.

Is it the biggest of all the clandestine agencies? Possibly, but one can't be sure. NSA is part of the Department of Defense and evidently has more employees than the 14,000 who work for CIA. Even the Defense Intelligence Agency is bigger than CIA and the domestic FBI chugs along with a mere 6,000 agents plus clerical help. In size of plant, NSA leads them all with a \$47 million complex on 82 acres at Fort Meade, Md.

In human terms, it is apt to think of NSA as one does of the technician who supplies James Bond with all the marvels he uses in his mating dances with SMERSH. It is hard to figure what Tully means when he says NSA is the greatest organization of its kind since the Biblical Israelites crossed over into Canaan—perhaps the use of sound as a weapon as against the walls of Jericho.

Be that as it may, it is in the realm of sound, communication, radio waves, telephone transmissions, bugs, et cetera that NSA shines, offensively and defensively. The agency preserves the secrecy of U.S.

code-cipher traffic and spends much of its time listening in on and deciphering the transmissions of other countries, obviously with the greatest emphasis on the U.S.S.R. and Red China.

Hard News

Tully's book, since he is primarily a newsman, is a collection of hard news stories. It tells a lot of things the man in the street would have no occasion to know, lacking total recall of all the news clippings of the past few years, and includes a few exclusives that are likely to remain exclusive.

There are interesting and uncheckable anecdotes. One indicates that the flying saucers are really some sort of surveillance vehicles which operate, according to Tully, in outer space and occasionally crash. Both sides have them, he writes.

But the major question remains unanswered and it is beyond any author's ability to do so. That question is: If President Truman formed the CIA in order to have one clearing house for all intelligence reaching the United States, why does the Department of Defense have a larger and more diverse grouping of sub-agencies doing the same thing CIA does?

In conclusion, a reader might wonder after reading this book whether Tully is pointing with pride or viewing with alarm.

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